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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (CLOSED)* OF THE 109th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 18 February 1988 at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BERNARD

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* The summary record of the first part (public) of the meeting appears as document CEDAW/C/SR.109.

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The closed meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. Ms. TALLAWY, speaking as the representative of Working Group I, proposed that, to save time, the introduction of initial reports should be limited to 20 minutes. Committee members, for their part, should make every effort not to duplicate questions. The Working Group should be allotted a regular meeting time, as it had proved difficult to convene it at 9 a.m.

2. The Working Group had also drawn up guidelines for second reports, designed to ensure that second reports would not amount to mere repetition of initial reports. Under the guidelines, the second report should focus on new legislative measures adopted by the Government since the first report, and on de facto progress, beyond legislative acts, in reversing obstacles to genuine equality. The second report should also note significant changes in the status and equality of women since the previous report and any remaining obstacles to equality for women in general. Each State's second report would also cover specific issues brought to its attention either by the Committee as a whole or by its individual members.

3. The Working Group had decided to adopt the procedure used by the Human Rights Committee in the consideration of second reports.

4. The CHAIRPERSON requested a report in writing on the work of Working Group I for distribution to all Committee members.

5. Ms. SINEGIORGIS stressed the need to encourage dialogue between the Committee and the States parties and did not feel that it was necessary to limit the time given to representatives of States parties to introduce their reports and reply to questions. States parties should be encouraged to reply in detail to questions raised by the Committee.

6. The members of the Committee had been able to eliminate some of the repetition in the questions which they asked representatives of States parties and should continue to do so in the future. Consideration should be given to the need to schedule the meetings of the working groups. Perhaps an hour could be set aside every other day or so for that purpose. With regard to the guidelines for second reports, the Committee could follow the practice used in the Human Rights Committee.

7. The CHAIRPERSON pointed out that States parties were informed that they should not exceed a certain amount of time in introducing their reports and that they should submit reports that were as complete as possible. She agreed that progress had been made in reducing repetition and the number of questions concerning reports. The members of the Committee should strive to keep their preliminary remarks on reports to a minimum and avoid repeating what previous speakers said. The Committee would have to decide on a way to schedule meetings of the working groups on a regular basis.

8. Ms. NOVIKOVA stressed the need to maintain the proper balance between the discussions in the Committee and the work conducted in the working groups.

9. Ms. SOUMARE underscored the need for flexibility in giving States parties sufficient time to introduce their reports and reply to questions, and agreed that it was necessary to encourage dialogue between the Committee and the reporting States. She also felt that it would be very useful to discuss the guidelines for the second reports in the working group.

10. Ms. SINEGIORGIS said that Working Group II had only met once and as yet had nothing to report.

11. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to a letter dated 1 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General in document A/42/383. The letter stated that, without wishing to question the fully independent evaluations of the Committee's experts, the French delegation regretted to note that the positions which it had set forth concerning its initial report at the sixth session of the Committee were not accurately reflected in the Committee's report (A/42/38) and therefore wished to draw attention to certain changes which it would have welcomed in that report.

12. Ms. EVATT proposed that, since that letter did not require any action, the Committee should simply state in its next report that it took note of the letter and should indicate the document symbol.

13. Ms. FORDE said she supported that proposal.

14. The CHAIRPERSON said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to take note of the letter from the Permanent Representative of France in its next report and indicate the relevant document symbol.

15. It was so decided.

The closed meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.